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MONTANA TRAVEL NEWS

ADVERTISING UNIT, MONTANA DEPT. OF HIGHWAYS, HELENA, MONTANA 59601 - VOL. 1, NO. 1, 1973

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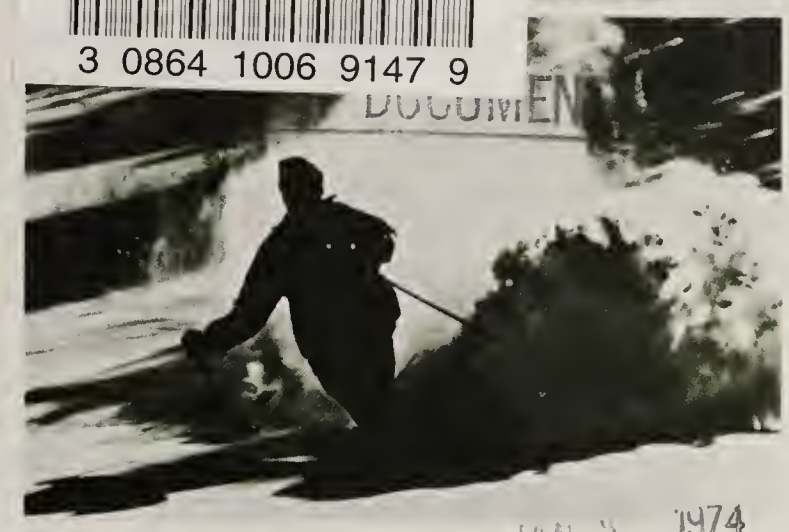

New Montana Ski Film Premieres November 7

Montana may well have the "hottest" ski film in the nation. That's the word that came out of the Los Angeles Sports Show October 11 where Montana's newest ski film was first shown to the nation's top ski area operators and ski manufacturers.

"Montana — A Little Farther North" is the most dazzling of Montana's ski films produced by Jim Rice, Kalispell, nationally known ski cinematographer. The film featured Montana's full service ski attractions, the challenging variety of slopes and winter sports fun.

Adding some breathtaking ski action to the full color 28-minute film were several teams of daredevil exhibition skiers who represent some of the country's top ski manufacturers. Rice arranged to have the ski teams from Head, K-2, White Stag and Salomon ski Montana's slopes. Two of the skiers, Eddy Ferguson and Scott Brooksbank, are featured in the October Ski Magazine as two of the five best "hotdoggers" in the world.

An outstanding filming technique of high speed photography will leave a memorable impression of Montana with dramatic slow motion ski action sequences which almost remind the viewer of the ballet. Acrobatic jumps, flips and turns are slowed almost to a standstill.

Simultaneously premieres to the general public will be held November 7 at 7:30 p.m. in Butte, Billings, Bozeman, Great Falls, Helena, Lewistown and Kalispell. Missoula premiere will be held November 11th during the Safety on Skis Show. Locations to be announced in the local media.

Ski clubs in these cities are being invited to host the premiere which is expected to draw many hundreds of skiing enthusiasts in each city.

Also attending the premiere will be representatives of the State of Montana and Montana Power Company who were major sponsors of the production of the film and together will also distribute to national TV audiences for 2 years. Forty prints will be made available to Modern Talking Pictures who will place the film on 400 television stations.

American Ski Scene, a syndicated half-hour ski show, has scheduled the film for the fall of 1974 on 200 TV stations. It is expected that the 600 telecasts will account for close to 30 million viewers.

"Ski West" a half hour syndicated television show has selected Montana's new ski film for use on 16 TV stations in the West and Northwest. Olympia Brewing Company will sponsor the show this winter.

Local offices of Montana Power will have prints of the film available for showings to group meetings after the November 7 premiere.

Montana to Print 500,000 Ski Brochures

Montana has moved into front line competition for the lucrative ski market with a cooperative, four color insert in the December issue of Ski Magazine.

Interest in Montana's growing ski area facilities has blossomed in the past few years, but the great impetus has come from international interest and excitement concerning Chet Huntley's Big Sky of Montana and its Mountain Village ski accommodations.

Few new ski areas have received as much advanced billing as has Big Sky. Views of Lone Mountain and ecstatic reports circulated by Big Sky pioneers have whetted the appetites of skiers world wide who want to challenge Big Sky's slopes.

The Ski Magazine insert will capitalize on this new interest in Montana skiing. Its theme: "America's Best Kept Secret — Montana!"

A general view of the state's ski attractions is given with the six full service areas featured. In addition to Big Sky, the insert describes Big Mountain, near Whitefish: Bridger Bowl, Bozeman; Snow Bowl, near Missoula: Red Lodge, and the new Discovery Basin, between Anaconda and Philipsburg. In addition to use in the December issue of Ski Magazine, it will also be inserted in Northwest Skier and Central Skiland.

Two hundred thousand of the inserts will be printed in advance and will serve as the state's winter mailing piece to inquirers. They will be distributed at ski shows and in ski shops throughout surrounding states. Inquiries from the insert coupon will be sent to the State Advertising Unit, Montana Department of Highways, Helena. This office, in turn, will distribute these inquiries to all interested parties.

Montana Plans For EXPO '74

Montana was one of the first states to sign up as an exhibitor for the fantastic Exposition, Expo 74, scheduled for May through October next year. The market — an expected 5 to 6 million Expo visitors traveling to and from the Spokane area as part of their 1974 summer vacation.

Montana will attract these potential tourists with an elaborate 500 square foot exhibit constructed in the round and located in the center of the Northwests States' Travel Pavilion. It will be strategically located in front of the entrance of the building with a concourse on each side of the exhibit. It will house three displays containing western artifacts, gold and precious stones.

A continuous photographic display of Montana attractions will hold visitors' attention. This 14 minute show will consist of a multi-media presentation featuring Glacier National Park, the five travel regions of Montana, and the Four Seasons story of state attractions told pictorially with a new Montana song as background.

Montana business will be represented with eight three-foot by six foot displays featuring color photographs, messages via earphone, and brochure handouts. These displays will be designed to harmonize with the rest of the exhibit. The State Advertising Unit will assume half the cost of the display—private industry the rest.

A giant, 15 foot wide transparency of St. Mary's Lake will beautifully illuminate the outside front of the exhibit. Other Montana scenes will be featured on the remaining outside walls.

Governor Thomas L. Judge stated that Montana has a great opportunity to improve its tourist travel volume next year by tying in with the Spokane Exposition. According to the Governor, it will draw millions of extra visitors to Montana's threshhold from all over the nation and the world.

Spokane, located only 83 miles from the Montana border, is within a day's driving distance of the Glacier National Park area, Missoula, Helena, Butte, and Montana's Yellowstone National Park entrances.

Theme for Expo 74 is "Celebrating Tomorrow's Fresh, New Environment." Promoting the Big Sky Country of Montana will be a natural tie-in with the Expo 74 theme. The State Advertising Unit will utilize all media to attract Expo 74 visitors from the East, Mid-West and South through Montana.

Expo officials, indicating a brisk interest in fair participation, announced recently that only 4,000 square feet of concession space remained available out of a beginning 80,000 square feet.

Promotion by Expo 74 officials will be extensive and international in scope. Much of this advertising will directly benefit Montana. Expo 74 promotion is already calling attention to Montana's Glacier to Yellowstone area as part of its "attraction area."

The international flavor of Expo 74 is already assured with indications that Russia, Taiwan, and France have signed up as exhibitors. Many other nations have indicated their interest in representation.

Until now, Montana's banner year for tourism was 1962, the year of the Seattle World Fair. Expo 74 should create the greatest tourist travel year in Montana's history!

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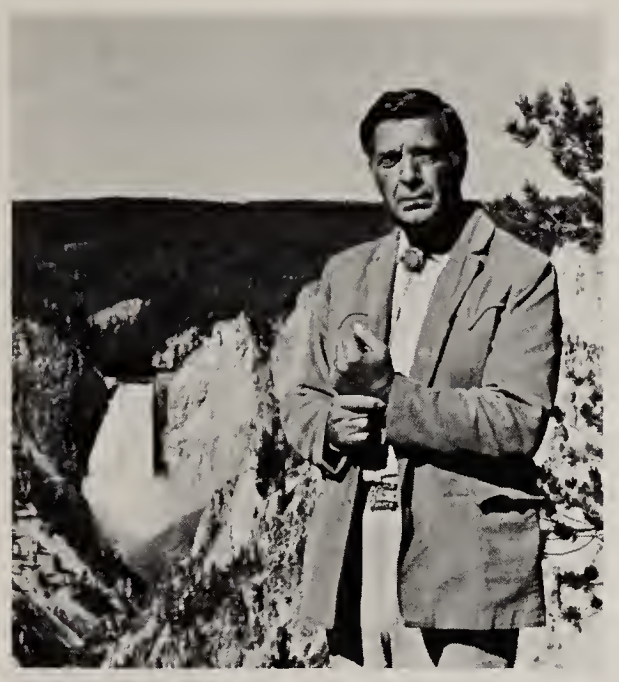

Old West Trail Film Named Nation's Best

"Explore the Old West Trail Country," a feature film created for worldwide television viewing, has been named the outstanding regional travel film produced in the U.S. in 1973. The award was presented at the 5th Annual U.S. Travel Conference at Lake Placid, New York, October 1.

Narrated by television personality, Chet Huntley, the half-hour film featured the scenic wonders and historic sites that abound in Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. The award winning film was produced by Robert Henkel of Helena and James Graff of Billings who also were responsible for the production of two Montana films — "Montana — Land of the Big Sky" and "Escape to Montana's Glacier Park."

Announcement of the award was jointly made by Discover America Travel Organizations, sponsors of the conference, and the Old West Trail Foundation. Irvine Bates, president of the Foundation, was on hand in Lake Placid to receive the award. He noted that the film was produced through matching funds provided by the U.S. Travel Service and Montana-Dakota Utilities. Distribution costs are being jointly paid by the five member states of the Foundation.

The film has only been in distribution for the past four months, and already been seen by over eight million television viewers. Additional millions will have an opportunity to discover the Old West as more television stations throughout the U.S. preview it for their audiences. The film has been translated in various languages and will soon be distributed worldwide.

Gasoline Rumors — Little Inconvenience Much Apprehension

Rumors of gasoline shortages affected tourist travel during the summer months, but Montana was affected less than many areas. A spot check by the State Advertising Unit in September found travel off about 2.5% in Montana for the summer with the major decrease coming in August.

Montana fared very well when compared to some other states such as Colorado which reported an 18% drop off from last year.

Early summer travel in Montana was above the previous year. For instance, Big Horn Canyon hosted visitations of 179,280 this year as against 168,432 last year — a 6.4% gain. However, the month of August showed a 30% drop over last August.

State travel officials believe that August travel has suffered due to earlier starting dates for public schools. The traditional post-Labor Day start has been moved steadily forward, with many schools starting in the last week of August this year.

Two of Montana's traditional tourist attractions showed decreases in visitations this year. Glacier Park was down 1.3%. Yellowstone Park was down 6.6% over last year. While the actual number of visitors to Yellowstone was down, Yellowstone Park Company reported an increase in use of facilities as guests lengthened their stay. The company also reported that no shortage of fuel was experienced in the Park or at gate communities.

Higher gasoline prices and rumored shortages stemmed, temporarily, an impressive growth of travel and tourism for Montana which had been growing at an average of 5% per year over the last 10 years.

Send your travel news notes to:

The Advertising Unit, Department of Highways, Garrett House, Helena, Montana 59601.

VISITOR COMPARISONS SUMMER 1972 - 1973

	1972	1973	Percentage
Custer Battlefield	294,477	233,961	(-20.5%)
Quake Lake	301,000	290,000	(-3.65%)
Lewis & Clark Caverns	84,768	70,676	(-16.6%)
Russell Museum, Great Falls	25,818	35,534	37.6%
Big Hole Battlefield	45,850	29,552	(-35.6%)
Fort Peck Visitor Center	445,000	471,778	6.0%
Fort Peck Theater	8,185	7,367	(-10.0%)
Big Mountain (Winter)	123,400	127,442	3.28%
Bridger (Winter)	141,200	143,101	1.35%
Helena Chamber	3,526	3,715	5.36%
*Glacier Park	1,282,324	1,263,083	(-1.5%)
Big Horn Canyon	168,432	179,280	6.4%
Total	2,923,980	2,855,489	(-2.34%)
*Yellowstone Park	1,903,910	1,778,896	(-6.57%)
Canadian Ports of Entry Not included in Total	880,400	858,585	(-2.48%)

*Up Through Labor Day

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Travel Writers Tour The West, Montana

Some of the nation's top outdoor and travel writers got an opportunity to meet Montana first hand when the Advertising Unit of the State Highway Department helped host the Society of American Travel Writers in conjunction with their convention in Jackson Hole, September 13-15.

A "Wake Up Breakfast" hosted by the Advertising Unit was attended by 140 writers and their guests. Promotional material about Montana's travel attractions was distributed, and the informal setting gave Montana officials an opportunity to visit personally with many of the writers.

Later, 41 of these writers would join the Advertising Unit and local chambers of commerce in a quick tour of some of the State's scenic, recreational and historic areas.

Twenty-three left Jackson Hole, via plane, to Billings and the site of Custer's Last Stand at Crow Agency. They then visited Glacier National Park and continued on to Great Falls and a special tour of the C.M. Russell Museum. The Billings Chamber of Commerce and the Great Falls Chamber co-hosted the guests while visiting their cities.

Another group of 18 traveled from Jackson Hole to Big Sky of Montana near Bozeman. Chet Huntley visited with the writers. From Big Sky, the tour group then split up for side tours to Virginia City, Howard Kelsey's Nine Quarter Circle guest ranch, Butte and Glacier National Park. Others traveled to the Lewis & Clark Caverns and Helena.

Scott Warden, Director of the Advertising Unit, said that the hosting venture was very successful. He called it a team effort of state and community people. Many of the writers visiting Glacier Park were experienced, world travelers, yet they were heard to say that few other places in the world could equal Montana's scenery.

Valuable contacts were made with influential travel writers at the convention as well as with those who participated in Montana. Represented were such publications as National Geographic, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the Boston Globe, and major airlines publications. Other visitors represented TV, professional photographers, and many other magazines and newspapers.

It is expected that these writers have gained enough interest and material to publish eye witness reports on Montana so millions of readers and listeners can gain interest and insight about the state which can trigger an "I've got to see that for myself" response.

As an investment in advertising, these tours speak for themselves. It would cost the state hundreds of thousands of dollars to purchase the amount of advertising space used by the professional writers to tell the Montana story.

John Olson Heads New Convention and Tour Dept.

John Olson, newly appointed coordinator of conventions and packaged tours for Montana, was amused by the $1.60 price tag for sausage and eggs in one of Helena's franchised restaurants. "In Tokyo," he offered, "that would have cost you around $4.00, and the facilities wouldn't have been any better."

In the capital city of Montana, a nice motel room costs the single traveler from $14.00 to $16.00. Comparable facilities in America's metropolitan centers would start at $35.00. Overseas, the better facilities are as much or more.

"Right now," he said, "Montana travel is one of the world's greatest bargains."

John Olson will travel the nation and the world selling Montana as a travel, convention and recreational mecca. Bolstering his personal love for the state with films, facts, brochures and details, he will capitalize on Montana's western flavor, cowboy and Indian lore, freshly discovered ski thrills, scenic grandeur, uncongested cities, relaxed pace — and reasonable rates. These, he feels certain, are the state's greatest attractions in the minds of metropolitan Americans and residents of crowded foreign cities.

Attracting conventions and package tours has become a highly competitive, sophisticated endeavor. Olson's challenge is to re-affirm his contacts with organizational leaders and professional tour packagers and acquaint them with the potentials of Montana. He is not new to the circuit, having just previously represented the Spokane area and one of its leading hotels in convention and travel promotion. He brings with him his growing personal file of groups and leaders who plan tours and conventions.

Already, John Olson can lay claim to steering 10 conventions to Montana. He views with optimism the growing convention facilities within the state and sees an ever growing future for Montana's accommodations industry.

Established organizations around the country have their annual conventions and regional get-togethers planned well in advance, according to Olson. We tell them about Montana's attractions and facilities now, then keep after them to select Montana as their meeting site for the next open date.

Governor Thomas L. Judge and Olson attended the recent state show in Tucson sponsored jointly by the Discover America Travel Organization and the U.S. Travel Service. Some 300 top international tour and convention packagers were represented. The Governor and Olson were granted 20 minute appointments with as many of the representatives as time would allow.

"Governor Judge stole the show," according to Olson. "He attended as a working delegate — not as a visiting dignitary. He spoke so eloquently and sincerely about Montana's attractions that these professionals were impressed, and they've been subjected to just about every kind of pitch. The Governor generated a tremendous interest in Montana," Olson concluded.

Olson is particularly enthusiastic about promoting Montana among the executive class of foreign countries. He cites the current world currency situation as directly benefiting Montana travel. He predicts a dramatic increase in the fly-in and drive around foreign visitor. For too many years, foreign visitors to America have only seen New York, Los Angeles or Miami. Now, they can afford to "really see" America and they will have the money available to probe deeper than the nearest sea coast. They particularly want to see the Old West — the America they've come to know from exported movies and TV.

John Olson as Montana's ambassador to the travel and convention world will be devoting all his time and talents to see that they see the Old West — in Montana.

Billings Hosts Nearly 7,000 Shriners

Bring six or seven thousand Shriners to Billings, Montana and what do you get? You get a smooth-running, fun and business gathering leaving almost unanimous praise for an accommodating city and state!

Billings Shriners and Royal Johnson, Billings, President of the Pacific Northwest Shrine Association, hosted the convention — one of Montana's largest.

Johnson has estimated that $700,000 to $1 million was spent in the Billings area as a direct result of the convention. As an example of "spin-off" benefits to the state, Johnson cites the Calgary delegation. Air Canada, which flew them to Montana, paid $800 in landing fees to the Great Falls airport.

There were delegations representing Alaska, Western Canada, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. A small group from Florida came to the convention because they wanted to see Montana.

There were in excess of 3,500 advanced reservations in Billings hotel and motel facilities. Banquets and luncheons were handled professionally, according to Johnson, who was well pleased with the convention accommodations.

Local Shriners established an efficient transportation dispatch pool to move guests and dignitaries throughout the city. A communications center received and dispatched messages with the aid of a complete list of which delegates could be located where.

Seventy-five units participated in the colorful, two-hour parade on Saturday.

Film Making

Hollywood in Montana?

The filming of the feature movie, "Thunderbolt and Lightfoot" in the Great Falls-Cascade area of Montana could be the proverbial tip of the iceberg for an exciting future for Montana and the film industry. "Thunderbolt and Lightfoot," starring Clint Eastwood, will be released next spring, and the State Advertising Unit is already making plans to capitalize.

"This kind of business is ideal for Montana," says Scott Warden, State Advertising Unit's Coordinator. "An undertaking is being made to promote even more movie productions in the state. We have the greatest variety of outdoor scenery in the nation — from badlands to majestic mountains; from gold rush towns to cattle country."

It has been estimated that the "Thunderbolt and Lightfoot" production crew and actors spent more than a million dollars in the state during their stay.

Tied in with the release of "Thunderbolt and Lightfoot" next spring, the Advertising Unit plans on placing advertisements in key film trade journals. Also in the planning stage is a meeting with motion picture producers and publicists in Hollywood.

A strong supporter of Montana as a movie making site is Abby Singer, production manager of the Clint Eastwood film. "Montana is virgin territory for movie productions with its wide variety of natural backgrounds virtually unseen in theater movies," he told state officials. "You've won over a lot of salesman for Montana. I'm going to try and interest the producers of the CBS motion picture branch to do their next film in Montana."

Few states will ever achieve the unique praise the "Thunderbolt and Lightfoot" producers and crew gave to Montana. Upon their leaving they purchased a large advertisement in the Great Falls paper thanking the area people for their kindness, assistance and cooperation. The headline read, "We love you, Montana."

Fall Brochure

For the first time the State Advertising Unit of the Montana Highway Department has a concerted effort for attracting travelers to Montana in the fall of the year. In addition to the state's spectacular fall scenery, the campaign promotes traditional fall events.

The new campaign followed Governor Judge's suggestion of promoting state travel year around rather than just summer and winter. Advertising promotion was set for the surrounding states and Canada. Ads were placed in key city newspapers and regional magazines. Radio spots were utilized in Spokane, Salt Lake City, and Calgary as well as public service spots in Wyoming, North Dakota and Nebraska.

The Advertising Unit has prepared a brochure giving highlights of the state's attractions during autumn. Copies are available by writing the State Advertising Unit/Montana Department of Highways, Helena, MT. 59601.

Travel Writers

The success of the State Advertising Unit's hosting of Travel and Outdoor Writers following the Society of American Travel Writers convention in Jackson Hole this summer has prompted Travel Coordinator, Scott Warden to promote additional tours in the future. Warden is negotiating with airline and AMTRAK officials, Montana dude ranchers and other accommodations industry leaders to assist in hosting large numbers of travel writers throughout the year. Other states, according to Warden, have extensive writer-host programs. Through cooperative efforts such as Warden has planned, the state's investment would be minimal but the resulting publicity in magazines and newspapers would be tremendously beneficial.

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